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United States Radio, War and Post-War

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(This speech was given by Mr. Hollister before the St. Louis Advertising Club and contains information which may be of use to station managers in their public relations work.)

The safe guide to the direction of post-war radio is a projection of the trends and techniques of the past and present. The intelligent layman's guess is likely to be as accurate as the research professional's, provided the layman accepts the potentials and limitations of finite radio engineering, and the professional researcher accepts the no less realistic but far less finite potentials and limitations of human nature, human relations and consumer reactions.

So your reporter in this series of post-war weather forecasts will not do much flapping around in prediction of specific facilities and services which radio will provide after the war has ended. To be sure, television (still around that corner) is within easy reach of production and actual broadcasting . . . but it will not serve widely unless it provides a form of entertainment, of instruction, of cultural and spiritual resort equivalent in quality at least to the standard of service provided by the invisible air today. A logical community of interest seems to be appearing over the horizon between the industry that knows best how to make pictures and the industry that knows best how to broadcast sound waves. Again, it is self-evident that another contrivance, called "radar," will serve the mass public in many and interesting ways—ways which cannot be described without telling the present enemy a lot of things he'd like to know about how radar is seeking him out and knocking him off. It ought not to take very long to put on the market improvements likewise in receiving sets of all sorts. Any engineer in radio can tell you some pretty

sensational stories about other superhuman mechanisms that will perfect the services of broadcasting. Your speaker today is no engineer. He is no prophet. Instead of the road of forecast, marked "Passable But Unsafe," he chooses the conventional graded highway in spite of occasional signs reading "Beware of Falling Rocks." He asks you simply to look back down the long steep grade up which radio has come so far, to observe the gradings and turns, and to guess with him what the general direction of radio's further progress upward may be.

Asks 'Modern' Radio Law

Constructive changes . . . that is, changes in the interest of most of the people, will not come abruptly. Restrictive changes, in the disinterest of the majority of the public, may come unwarned at any time through the capricious application of bureaucratic power, and further restriction of that freedom of speech upon which press and radio base inseparably and wholly. Let us assume that such lightning will not strike, though that is certainly an optimistic assumption until Congress passes a modern and equitable radio law. Let us concern ourselves not at all with the electrical gadgets under cover today. Let's take a glimpse of that path that radio has come to date.

Remember that public-serving radio, serving most of the people most of the time, is only about 20 years old. In that short span some 31,000,000 American families have come to depend enormously upon the 900 free radio stations and upon the American "fair-bargain" method of adver-

tising goods and services over those stations so profitably as to furnish a fabulous daily total of entertainment, instruction and culture without "admission fee" to all who care to listen in our nation. In 20 years American free enterprise has built a radio system which cannot be degraded to the position of mouthpiece for any administration, any pressure group. During those same 20 years there broke upon our people the greatest of all wars in the history of our self-preservation, and for the first time there was ready for instant use a means of communication to all the people.

Less than 24 hours after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt spoke not only to the assembled Houses and the press and the representatives of the foreign nations, but to some 63,000,000 rank-and-file American listeners. He was heard abroad, too. He was heard in Berlin and Rome and Tokio. The next evening he spoke again from the White House and some 70 million Americans listened. Thus within a couple of days of actual war, the people of our nation got their marching orders from the heard voice of their commander-in-chief. And from that voice the peoples of the world knew exactly where the United States of America stood.

No Radio 'Retooling' Necessary

From the moment the first news flashes from Pearl Harbor broke into that Sunday radio program on December 7, 1941, the full force of American radio swung into war action. No retooling was necessary. There isn't much question that radio's swift distribution of every flicker of developing war news made the American people the best-informed, as well as the largest, company of freemen on earth concerning the immediate fortunes and hazards of their country suddenly plunged into war.

Now at the risk of trying your patience with numbers, I propose to make that statement specific . . . for upon its proof will base your own easy projection of where radio is to go when peace comes. I shall now report to you certain war-time accomplishments of radio broadcasting, as these accomplishments are reflected from the records of a single network (CBS).

This report will take us from Pearl Harbor Day down through March 30, 1943 (the latest date of summary record), and it will go outside the CBS records to cite certain totals of joint accomplishment in radio by the Advertising Council and the Radio Division of the Office of War

Information. The only reason why the records of all four major networks are not included is because they are not available to this reporter. The totals run up by the single network which I shall recite are impressive enough alone; they are typical, I believe, of the pattern of activity followed on the other three networks; let their moral, therefore, be multiplied by four.

To the least of the 900-odd stations in the United States, radio volunteered, and to the least of the thousands of national and local advertisers using radio, their services were instantly placed at the disposal of the single common cause.

They sprayed the air morning, noon and night with a volume and variety of war information which no nation before had ever received in such proportion to its diverse and gigantic need. Quality and finesse and subtlety had to stand aside for quantity, for when a dam breaks it is common sense to block the flood before you try to purify the water upstream. No use to quibble now, or any time in the future, unless you're an academic historian, a professional dilettante, or a disgruntled politician, as to whether there was during those first months of radio, too much, or too little, on the air, for the average shocked mind to absorb and to react to.

Radio Converts National Mood

One result is plain: never before had the *mood* of so large a democracy been so swiftly converted to a war footing, pointed in the direction of its most effective volunteer war behavior, or stimulated to project its volunteer tradition to greater result.

Out of the fog of mobilization, certain forces began to loom clear: (1) In government the departments and usable agencies most directly concerned with war, and with total civilian support of it based on the complete dissemination of essential war information. (2) In civilian life, the 900-odd radio stations who provide 31,000,000 of the 34,000,000 homes in America with constant free radio-listening of all sorts. (3) In civilian life too, the thousands of manufacturers and stores and services who alone implement the radio industry with the funds for providing broadcasting. The major problem became (and it is today much the same problem multiplied) one simply of collecting the information, sorting it, putting it into the best form to broadcast, persuading the network or station or advertiser to pay for it and putting it out on the air . . . and thus getting the information to the people.

The Office of Facts and Figures took over the Herculean job of bringing some sort of orderly flow into this torrent. The Office of War Information took over from the OFF, improved on its methods, staffed it with people somewhat more seasoned to their technical tasks (in its domestic radio division in particular) and produced a strikingly heavy and smooth flow of traffic in clearing the information output of 30 separate Government agencies (and two quasi-governmental agencies, the National War Fund and the Red Cross) to the total of the people.

Now to bring that flow down to realistic figures, let us see how war information of all sorts actually went to the American people over the CBS network alone during the period December 7, 1941, to March 31, 1943—a total of 480 war days.

CBS Is Active

CBS broadcast during that period a total of 11,880 programs containing war matter.

These 11,880 separate programs treated 16,055 war "items."

These 11,880 CBS programs used 2,165 hours 42 minutes of radio time, donated wholly by the network or the advertiser.

In addition to these 11,880 programs, CBS broadcast 6,221 programs of war news.

The grand total of *war broadcasts* of this single network, therefore, was (during this period), 18,101; they treated of 22,276 war items; they used 3,349 hours 39 minutes of broadcasting time, for which Government paid not one penny.

Of these 18,101 war programs, 9,272 were bought and paid for and volunteered to the war-effort by advertisers.

The remaining 8,829 war programs were bought and paid for and volunteered by the network . . . that is, they were sustaining programs.

Now to sharpen the focus of the effect of this upon the morale of the American people, let us take a cross-section . . . an average day . . . during this period, on this one network:

During an average, typical day . . .

12 times the audience heard a sustaining war-program.

22 times the audience heard a war program volunteered by an advertiser.

8 times the audience heard also a sustaining war news program.

5 times the audience heard also a sponsored war news program.

Thus . . .

47 times a day the radio audience of this single network heard war information.

What's more, the total of *war information* broadcast during an average CBS day was 37.6% of the entire broadcasting clock of the day.

Exclusive of war news, 91 different major war topics were treated in the subject matter of the program itself during the first 480 days of the war. In addition, seventy war topics were handled via straight war announcements. In all, CBS broadcasts aided 99 mutually exclusive major war campaigns during this period.

No man who has the faintest knowledge of the dependence of the American public upon radio, and who knows that the average family listening reflects that dependence by using its radio over 4 hours a day, can sneer at the power that radio has used with self-discipline and forthright patriotism since we went to war. It is important to bear in mind that the OFF and the OWI have never deviated from their basic policy of **guided voluntary effort**. It is equally important to recognize that the voluntary response was forthcoming to a degree no prophet could have foretold.

Now let us open the diaphragm of our lens so as to get a picture, if we can, of the combined war effort of *all* the networks and *all* the individual stations, as those records come off the diary of the Office of War Information.

OWI receives its broadcastable material from 32 government agencies. It sorts this inflow into eight classes, or eight different methods of most suitable *treatment*. Out of OWI, to the networks and stations and agencies and advertisers, these eight great "pipe-lines" carry the war information to the radio transmitters, where it is broadcast incessantly to all America.

Public Gets the Low-Down

Through this "processing and clearing" technique, the U. S. radio public receives (according to the circulation estimates of the OWI itself) during each average week:

74,450 station war-information broadcasts.

It is the OWI's reasonable calculation that these broadcasts amass a total of Listener-Impressions each week amounting to 474,800,000.

Huge as that figure is, if you divide it by total population, it provides no more than the exposure of the total of the American people about four times a week to a war message. Maybe it's not "too much," but really little after all. This is a 7-day war, isn't it? I haven't heard that the men in uniform get three days off each week.

The plan for sorting and clearing this mass of war information is the joint development of the OWI and the Advertising Council; it isn't any more complex than an International Business Machine, but like that machine it sorts out, adds up, and works. Here's a typical week's schedule broadcasting during March, 1943; the estimate of Listener-Impressions is OWI's own, and it must be noted that the OWI confesses that "these figures cannot possibly take into account the spontaneous efforts by *commercial* programs which we cannot always trace." But look at that typical week:

WAR BONDS got	165,320,000	(Listener
MEAT RATIONING	154,960,000	Impressions)
U. S. CROP CORPS	132,750,000	
WAAC RECRUITING	94,820,000	
VICTORY GARDENS	44,960,000	
SOCIAL SECURITY		
CARDS	44,960,000	
RED CROSS	42,800,000	
HOME FORCES	23,210,000	
UNITED NATIONS	19,450,000	
FIGHTING FORCES	16,570,000	
WORKING FORCES	11,680,000	
THE ENEMY	9,530,000	
WOMANPOWER		
WAR JOBS	9,000,000	
LEND LEASE	4,800,000	
POST WAR WORLD	2,910,000	

The mass of voluntary war-information broadcasting adds up to a large sum of hard money.

87 Millions Donated

"Broadcasting" (the magazine) on March 29, 1943, estimated the time volunteered by networks, stations and advertisers to programs cleared through OWI, at \$71,570,000 at card rates and best discounts; the talent donated at \$15,330,000; the total contribution for a single year of war broadcasting under the OWI-Council plan of clearance at \$86,900,000.

The actual out-of-pocket is considerably more than that figure today. One little item in the calculation worth noting is that the total of U. S. radio stations were estimated to broadcast 400,000 quarter-hour Government transcriptions in a year . . . an out-of-pocket of some \$7,740,000 for those stations themselves.

It is impossible to do more than hit the high spots of results. The intangibles are brilliantly apparent to everyone who has the eyes to observe. But some of the tangibles are unusual.

The radio campaign on Victory Gardens helped raise the decision-to-plant from 48% (1942) to 59% in 1943 (about 2 million families).

A concentration on V-letters increased the processing 116% in 3 weeks.

Fat-and-grease collections went up, under radio advocacy, from 3,016,338 pounds in August, 1942, to 7,273,016 pounds in March, 1943.

The Coast Guard says that the applications for reserve officers' training rose 40% following the radio network time allotted the service.

Prentiss Brown called the radio broadcasting of point-rationing "an outstanding job." Norman Davis says the 1943 Red Cross Drive was "successful due to the splendid cooperation of radio and other media."

A Victory Food Special drive on cheese moved cheese "into the millions of pounds," according to the administrator. In fuel oil (Mr. Ickes testifying), in War Bonds (Mr. Morgenthau speaking), in Community War Chest Mobilization (Mr. Tom Smith on the stand), the witnesses all confirm the force voluntary radio added to the solution of an emergency. Radio in a few months trebled the number of citizens who believed that gasoline and mileage rationing *was* necessary. Radio discouraged Christmas travel so thoroughly that Mr. Eastman said radio averted a railroad breakdown.

The Army and the CAA wanted glider pilots, and a 2-weeks' radio campaign got 30,000 grade-A candidates. . . . In a 10-day radio campaign, 92% of the country was convinced that a Victory Tax was not only tolerable, but did so without drawing down the sale of War Bonds. Shoe rationing had to be kept so secret that the OWI called it "the oyster campaign" . . . but when it was announced it was announced by Sunday radio . . . the stores were closed. When they opened Monday morning, radio had averted stampedes and chiselling.

Red Cross Recruitment Booms

The Red Cross needed 3,000 nurses a month, and in 3 weeks of radio enrollments went up 100%. The Office of Defense Health and Welfare needed student nurses, and the radio industry and the advertisers of the country got 23,972 applicants, of whom 19,000 were eligible. In the spring, radio urged immediate though unseasonable coal purchase, and deliveries went up 70%. The CAA wanted non-combat pilots, and though every previous recruiting effort had failed, radio got them 104,000 new applications. Recruitment of war workers at U. S. Employment Services gained 21% in January over the previous months . . . under skillful radio exposition. And so on. . . .

The short paragraph of "results" is a flea-bite on the total. The total, no mind, no set of adding machines, can encompass. But a good deal of what radio has done . . . through voluntary effort all down the line, mind you . . . can be sensed by everyone here as he goes about his daily life. It is apparent, it is plain as day, in the attitude of every real patriot you know . . . every clamorous, impatient, let's-go, common-sensible, self-confident American citizen who has forced himself to think this thing through despite his indifference to "being told," his jealous grip on the right of free speech, his resentment of coercion of all sorts.

Someone said one night, pre-war, in the presence of a great general of the old Army, "We're a peaceful nation." "Peaceful, hell," said the General officer, "we are a damn war-like nation! Step on our toes or shut our mouth or try to order us around without showing us how and why, and look out!" Radio, I think, has helped to "show us how and why." Not all we want to know, by a long shot, but it is possible that we could talk so much that we might tell the enemy something of aid and comfort.

And radio hasn't told us unpleasant things in the manner we all like best, either. But figures like those I have recited, and they are indeed fragmentary, cannot be construed as apology by any but the mischievous. They stand on their own bottom. It would at least be equitable if the experts who want to tyrannize the radio structure, or to sand its machinery, could stand so securely on their own record of performance.

We Have Just a Glimpse

Now we've had a glimpse . . . and I repeat it is only a fractional glimpse of the impact of radio upon a people at war. We have had no glimpse at all of the steady daily service provided to take people to churches-of-the-air by the millions, to pour out to them the music of half a dozen first-rate symphony orchestras, to carry to the total electorate with rigid impartiality both sides of all controversial questions, to invite the mass of the American public to attend regular schools of the air, and to provide the mass of the public with a daily bill-of-fare of outright entertainment the like of which has never been offered to any people on earth. But all those services went forward, pursued with extra skill and extra zeal by the broadcasters who knew that it's just twice as important to support the human mind and spirit in wartime as in peacetime. We have not time to glimpse the short-wave operation which has pre-

sented the American viewpoint to the world, nor to glimpse the job that has been done to short-wave special entertainment to our men in the field all over the world.

On the train last Tuesday I met a Marine corporal, a kid, from Indianapolis, and on his sleeve was a patch marked Guadalcanal. "Get any radio?" I asked. "Sure, sure." "What's best?" "Well, I *guess* that 'Command Performance.' One of the boys got a little receiver and man, we sure didn't miss that one!" "How many listen at a time?" "Oh," he said, "many as could git within hearing. Not less than three or four hundred. And boy, I want to tell you, when they played that Star-Spangled Banner you see plenty of 'em crying right into their whiskers. It shore does something *to* you."

What Is Ahead?

I could stand here till the war ends reciting facts and figures. I won't. I'll take a long running guess ahead, and look out for falling rocks.

Radio hasn't begun to start to commence to approach its horizon. It's going to help rip the sides off the colleges and universities, so the folks outside who support them can see and hear what's going on inside them, and apply it to their own lives, and receive a *quid pro quo* for their contributions, especially to the endowed and private institutions and laboratories.

Radio can be a major force in a renaissance of reliance upon religion. Radio has already learned ways to translate academic book-larnin' into audible forms and dimensions more "graphic," therefore more memorable, than the printed page. Radio can do things the press cannot, just as the press can do things radio cannot . . . and the sooner the sophomores in both industries throw away their brass knuckles and accept the nobility of joint responsibility which is inherent in their community of interest, the better.

Radio can continue to fashion, out of a nation of human beings who find it a little hard to carry a tune even in a bathtub, a nation of real musicians . . . as radio has already begun to do. These are a very few of the things radio can do, if (and only if) the American people wish it. Radio can collect and disseminate live news from here to Singapore and back, it can acquaint people with each other as no other medium short of physical travel can do. If you want radio post-war to help heal the world radio is ready . . . and there will be new techniques as forward of today's as today's are forward of the programming you heard on your crystal set back in 1923.

Radio Creates Demand

It is pretty generally agreed that if we are to adopt a national policy of low-priced productive abundance after the war . . . and there is no other policy conceivable if this country is to go on a free democracy . . . it will base on full employment, at a wage which will buy the low-priced abundance that can be produced only by full employment. This implies a volume distribution of goods and services which makes the pre-war consumption look palid by comparison. But before there can be consumption (even granted money in the pocket) there must be demand. Radio has already proven its power in creating demand. It can create new demand for Kishlar's food and Irwin's plastic and Bowes' glass and Dunn's railroads as well as for Miller and Proeser's ideas.

The price level of radio itself to the distributor must not exclude the small distributor of goods and services. Radio, from the start, has been challenged to produce programs which would certainly follow, preferably the veering tastes of the public; the challenge is greater today, and will be

greater tomorrow. After all, nothing in the world causes the average radio-owning family to spend an average of four or five hours a day listening except that the average programming is *wanted*.

Radio broadcasting as a producing industry is itself deeply interested in turning out a product *demande*d, because it is "*better for less*," by most people; the radio industry is wholly selfish in intending not only to serve as a medium for sustained employment in the other productive plants and systems of our economy, but in its own plant as well. For two years past CBS has been studying post-war; CBS has no "package plan" to solve the world's ailments. But when the whistles blow, this network of ours, and every other network, and every station that is of no network but that is somewhere serving its community with its best possible product . . . they'll all be there doing their best to adjust to the new order as they adjusted that Sunday afternoon December 7, 1941.

Now, gentlemen, thank you for your patience. Add up your own guess. It's the correct, or 64-dollar, answer. Now let the rocks fall where they may.